



EPAP EXPANDED PROFESSIONAL
ASSOCIATES PROGRAM

ANNOUNCING THE FALL 2014 EXPANDED PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATES PROGRAM (EPAP) OPEN SEASON FOR APPLICATION FOR QUALIFICATION TO THE PROGRAM

REFERENCE: [Changes to the program and addition of fall 2014 open season](#)

1. SUMMARY: The Department is pleased to announce the fall 2014 Open Season for application for qualification to the Expanded Professional Associates Program (EPAP), beginning October 15. This cable provides detailed information on the program application process and helpful resources to assist with application preparation, including notice of a FLO sponsored Global Webinar for all interested parties on October 8 (see paragraph 8, below). Please review this message and REFERENCE document carefully for details outlining changes to the EPAP program and the application process. Due to tremendous interest in EPAP from family members of all agencies, the number of applicants grows substantially each year. **All eligible family members interested in participating in EPAP are encouraged to apply for qualification to the program during the upcoming open season.**

2. PROGRAM OVERVIEW: EPAP provides 186 professional level Foreign Service full-time positions, funded centrally, primarily by the Department of State and some through ICASS, to U.S. citizen eligible family members (EFMs) serving at U.S. Missions abroad. EPAP Professional Associate positions are available in Economics, Management, Political, Public Diplomacy, Financial Management, General Services, Human Resources, Information Management, Office Management or Medical (physician or nurse) areas. Pay grades range from FP-07 to FP-04.

Posts identify which positions they would like filled via EPAP and request positions through their respective Regional Bureau. Each Regional Bureau is authorized a

number of these positions, as determined by the Under Secretary for Management and makes the final decision within the allotted positions available.

FLO conducts two open seasons for application for qualification to EPAP each year. **The next open season will be October 15 – 31, 2014.**

3. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS: In order to participate in EPAP, an applicant must be an Eligible Family Member (EFM) who is

- at least 21 years old;
- a U.S. citizen spouse or U.S. citizen same-sex domestic partner, listed by name on the assignment notification/cable or approved Form OF-126 (Foreign Service Residence and Dependency Report) of a career (direct-hire, not contract) Foreign Service, Civil Service employee of any federal agency, or uniformed services member who is currently serving (or will be serving) in a full-time position overseas at a U.S. mission or at an office of the American Institute in Taiwan under Chief of Mission authority; and
- resides at the sponsoring employee's post of assignment abroad at a U.S. mission, or, as appropriate, at an office of the American Institute in Taiwan.

Other family members or dependents of direct-hire Foreign Service, Civil Service, or uniformed service employees, Members of Household (MOH), or family members of contractors are NOT eligible.

Same-Sex Domestic Partners must comply with the provisions of 3 FAM 1612, including the filing of the Affidavit of Eligibility for Benefits and Obligations (DS 7669).

4. PREVIOUSLY QUALIFIED APPLICANTS: Individuals who applied in any previous EPAP open season and were found eligible by the Qualification Evaluation Panels (QEPs) in one or more of the EPAP areas, DO NOT NEED to re-apply for qualification in those previously qualified areas. Qualifications are good for the duration of the program as long as a candidate remains an eligible EFM.

5. APPLICANTS SEEKING ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS: Individuals who applied in any previous EPAP open season and wish to request qualification in additional areas and/or were not found eligible, have additional work or educational

experience that would support their request and wish to be re-evaluated in an area in which they were not previously qualified, must submit a new application this open season.

6. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS: Beginning with this open season, several changes to the process will take effect, see REFERENCE document listed above. Applicants will respond to a vacancy announcement, beginning October 15 and submit their application, including required documents (see below) via <https://www.usajobs.gov/>

In advance of October 15, prospective candidates should take the following steps and gather the required documents:

-- **Create or update a USAJOBS Resume.** First create an account and register at <https://www.usajobs.gov/> and then create an online resume. Be sure to include all relevant work experience you wish to be considered. **Any experience not included will not be considered by the Qualification Evaluation Panel (QEP) or the Regional Bureau. This is the only type of resume that can be submitted with an application.**

-- **Secure a copy of the sponsoring employee's assignment cable/notification** or approved form OF-126 listing the applicant by name as a dependent, the sponsoring agency and current or upcoming post of assignment. **This information is essential to confirm eligibility for the program.** Without it, the application will not be forwarded to the Qualification Evaluation Panel (QEP) for consideration. If a prospective applicant's sponsoring employee's agency does not provide all the required information in a single document, contact the EPAP Coordinator at FLOaskEPAP@state.gov to discuss options immediately.

-- **Request college/university transcripts.** These must be legible, include the applicant's name and indicate the degree(s) (if any) awarded and course work completed. Note: these do not have to be official transcripts; unofficial copies of school records are acceptable, as long as they meet the above requirements. If the transcripts do not include the degree(s) awarded, include a copy of the diploma with the transcripts. **Create a single document of all of educational records** (i.e. scan them all together into a single document).

Foreign Education Provision: Foreign education transcripts will not be accepted. Foreign education (that is education acquired outside of any State of the U.S., the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, a Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, or any territory or possession of the U.S.) must be evaluated by a credential evaluation service recognized by the U.S. Department of Education in order to be credited towards qualification. Applicants can request an evaluation (most organizations charge a fee for this service) from a member organization of one of the two national associations of credential evaluation services:

National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) is an association of 19 credential evaluation services with admission standards and an enforced code of good practice. www.naces.org

Association of International Credentials Evaluators (AICE) is an association of 10 credential evaluation services with a board of advisors and an enforced code of ethics. www.aice-eval.org

Credential evaluations are not free and applicants are responsible for the cost of the selected service. The cost will vary according to the complexity of the case and the amount of documentation you can provide. Prior to submitting any documents to a credential evaluation service, you will also need to obtain English translations of any non-English documents, preferably notarized.

Applicants will submit copies of their foreign education credential evaluations in lieu of transcripts in their applications. The QEP cannot consider any foreign education credentials that have not been evaluated.

-- Individuals claiming veteran's preference must submit a copy of their DD-214 with their application; this is required of those who are preference eligible.

-- Medical professionals must include a copy of their current U.S. medical license with their online applications.

7. APPLICATION PROCESS: Once the vacancy announcement is posted on USAJOBS.gov, individuals begin the process by clicking the *Apply Online* button on the vacancy announcement. They will be directed to the Gateway to State site where they will respond to two sets of questions. The first will ask about their

current or past federal employment. The second confirms their eligibility for the program and allows them to indicate in which areas they are requesting qualification. Applicants may select as many areas for qualification as they are interested in and would accept a position in, if it were offered. They will then attach their USAJOBS resume and upload the required documents to complete and submit their application. This process closely approximates the application process for Foreign Service Specialists and most federal employment.

Applicants should allow at least three to four hours to complete their application package and are encouraged not to wait until the deadline to submit their applications. Individuals must meet all the qualification requirements and submit all required supporting documentation by the closing date of the vacancy announcement.

The application deadline is 11:59 p.m. eastern time Friday, October 31, 2014. No submissions will be accepted after the deadline.

8. FLO GLOBAL WEBINAR: To further assist prospective applicants and answer questions in advance of the open season, FLO's EPAP Coordinator will conduct a webinar on Wednesday, October 8 at **9:00 a.m.** Eastern time. All interested individuals are encouraged to register and participate in the webinar. CLO Coordinators and HROs may wish to organize a group viewing with eligible EFM's. To register, individuals should send an email with the Subject Line "EPAP Webinar" to FLOaskEPAP@state.gov and include the participant's name, sponsoring employee's name and agency.

Participants will need a computer with a high-speed Internet connection and speakers. Only the presenter will be able to speak; however, the chat function will allow individuals to post questions after the presentation. Individuals may participate by logging in as a "guest" at

<http://deptofstatehr.adobeconnect.com/flo/>

9. OTHER RESOURCES: FLO's EPAP Coordinator has also created a Checklist, Tips and Reminders document that details the requirements of the application and provides tips and suggestions, including technical trouble-shooting advice for preparing applications to EPAP. All prospective applicants are advised to review

the document and all webinar participants are encouraged to print it out and have it available during the webinar. It is available on HR/FLO's website at:

<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c41174.htm>

10. REVIEW PROCESS: HR/FLO will convene Qualification Evaluation Panels (QEPs) to review applications submitted by eligible candidates. The QEP will evaluate each candidate as either qualified or not qualified for the area(s) to which they applied. Once the QEPs have finished their evaluation, HR/FLO will send applicants email notification of the results of their review. HR/FLO will also forward the applications of qualified applicants to respective Regional Bureaus. Qualifications are good for the duration of the program as long as a candidate remains an eligible EFM. Qualification for an area does not guarantee an offer of employment.

HR/FLO hopes to provide notification by mid-December 2014.

11. POSITION ADVERTISEMENT AND SELECTION: Beginning with this open season, positions will be advertised separately from the qualification process. Later this year, Regional Bureaus will create a list of available positions, which FLO will advertise. At that time, qualified candidates will submit a letter of interest and if it has been more than a year since they were qualified, submit a DS-174 to the Regional Bureau Representative stating their interest in consideration for position(s) in areas in which they have already been qualified. Candidates must be qualified in the advertised area in order to apply for the position. For example, for a position in Human Resources, candidates must have been previously qualified in EPAP in Human Resources. Qualification in Management does not cover an EPAP position in Human Resources or any other area. Candidates must have at least one year remaining on their overseas posting and are expected to make a one-year commitment to the program.

Family members are encouraged to seek qualification during this open season in order to be ready to apply for any future positions.

For additional information, check out:

<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c41174.htm>

or contact the EPAP Coordinator at FLOaskEPAP@state.gov.